

PLANNING STATEMENT

**Land east of Ger-y-Bont,
Hirwaun Road, Penywaun**

September 2024



Summary

Proposal:

Proposed residential development and associated works.

Location:

Land to the east of Ger-y-Bont, Hirwaun Road, Penywaun, Aberdare

Date:

September 2024

Project Reference:

22.137

Client:

Newydd Housing Association

Product of:

Asbri Planning Limited
Unit 9 Oak Tree Court
Mulberry Drive
Cardiff Gate Business Park
Cardiff CF23 8RS

Prepared by:

George Milburn | Planner

Approved by:

Dylan Green | Associate

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Introduction

- 1.1 This Planning Statement has been prepared by Asbri Planning Ltd on behalf of Newydd Housing Association in relation to the proposed full planning application for the development of 17no. residential dwellings and associated works on Land to the east of Ger-y-Bont, Hirwaun Road, Penywaun, Aberdare.
- 1.2 The application site is located to the east of Ger-y-Bont and to the north of Hirwaun Road, near the centre of Penywaun, in the north of the Rhondda Cynon Taf County Borough. The site comprises an irregular shaped vacant field parcel measuring approximately 0.5 Ha and is located on grid coordinates X: 297509, Y: 204566.
- 1.3 Penywaun is identified as a Smaller Settlement, and is located a short distance south of the Key Settlement of Hirwaun. As such, it is identified as an important service centre and a principle location for accommodating housing growth within Rhondda Cynon Taf.
- 1.4 This proposal seeks to deliver much needed affordable homes on a vacant site within the defined settlement boundary within the adopted LDP and will present an opportunity to present a high-quality scheme on a site that is vacant and underused whilst also linking to the existing highway network.
- 1.5 The planning application comprises the following set of drawings:

Drawing name (with reference)	Prepared By
Planning Application Forms	Asbri Planning Ltd
CIL Forms	Asbri Planning Ltd
Site Location Plan (LT2400.00.01)	LeTrucco Design
Proposed Site Layout (LT2402.04.01)	LeTrucco Design
Proposed Site Sections (LT2402.04.03)	LeTrucco Design
Proposed Boundary Details (LT2410.04.04)	LeTrucco Design
Proposed Boundary Identification Plan (LT2410.04.02)	LeTrucco Design
Proposed Floor and Elevation Plans (Plots 1-3) (LT2410.04.100)	LeTrucco Design
Proposed Floor and Elevation Plans (Plots 4-5 and 17) (LT2410.04.200)	LeTrucco Design
Proposed Floor and Elevation Plans (Plots 6-7) (LT2410.04.300)	LeTrucco Design

Proposed Flats Floor and Elevation Plans (Plots 8-13) (LT2410.04.400)	LeTrucco Design
Proposed Floor and Elevation Plans (Plots 14-15) (LT2410.04.500)	LeTrucco Design
Drainage Strategy (22135-C-002-C)	Quad Consult
Topographical Survey	Usk Land Surveys
Landscape Plans	Tirlun Design

1.6 In addition, the following supporting documents are submitted.

Document	Prepared by
Planning application forms (1APP)	Asbri Planning
Application Covering Letter	Asbri Planning
Design and Access Statement	Asbri Planning
Planning Statement	Asbri Planning
Drainage Strategy Report	Quad Consult
Ecology Site Assessment Survey	Ecological Services Ltd
Reptile Survey Report	Ecological Services Ltd
Geotechnical Report	TerraFirma
Transport Technical Note	Asbri Transport
Arboricultural Report	ArbTS
Green Infrastructure Statement	Tirlun Design

1.7 This Planning Statement presents the planning case for the proposed development having regard to the site and its surroundings, the planning history, and policy context. It considers the key policy issues and planning merits of the proposed development. The statement is structured as follows:

- **Section 2:** provides a description of the site and its surroundings
- **Section 3:** includes a review of the site's planning history and a summary of the pre-application discussions
- **Section 4:** summarises the development proposals;
- **Section 5:** outlines the relevant planning policy context, at both the national and local level;
- **Section 6:** addresses the key planning considerations associated with the development proposal; and
- **Section 7:** provides a conclusion regarding the overall acceptability of the application.

Site Description

General location

- 2.1 The application site is located to the east of the residential properties along Ger-y-Bont and to the north of Hirwaun Road (A4059) within the centre of Penywaun. The site is centred on grid coordinates X:297509, Y: 204566.
- 2.2 The site's surrounding context is predominantly residential, with properties located at Ger-y-Bont and Haulfryn, to the north, with employment and leisure uses located to the east off Hirwaun Road and Gwladys Street. The site borders farmland to the south of Hirwaun Road.

Site Description

- 2.3 The site comprises an irregular parcel of land which increases in steepness to the north-west, measuring approximately 0.5ha in size. The site is vacant scrub land and is considered to be unmanaged. Metal fencing stands around the perimeter of the site, at a height of approximately two metres. No existing structures are located within the site boundary.
- 2.4 The application is accompanied by a topographical survey which confirms that the site steeply slopes towards its north westernmost corner. The site elevation is approximately 208m AOD steeply sloping down to the west to 205m AOD.
- 2.5 Historically, the central and eastern area of the site was located in an area of colliery spoil associated with the Pwll Bryngwyn mine. The site up until 1990s was a parking area with a row of garages. These were demolished prior to 1996 and the site has remained mostly the same to the present day. The site, therefore, comprises brownfield, previously developed land.
- 2.6 The site is defined by hardstanding interspersed with mature vegetation. An area of vacant land with mature vegetation is to the north and Penywaun Recreation Ground to the east of the site.
- 2.7 The accompanying Tree Constraints Plan and Tree Report confirms that there are no trees located within the site boundary. Three no. trees are identified to be located immediately to the west of the site boundary, inclusive of Ash (Category C – Low), Cypressup (Category C – Low), and Goat Willow (Category C – Low).
- 2.8 A review of the historic environment database and historic OS mapping shows there are no listed structures or Scheduled Ancient Monuments within the site boundary or in close proximity to the application site. The nearest identified heritage asset is the 'Remains of Gamlyn Railway Viaduct', an Ancient Scheduled Monument,

located approximately 600m to the north-east of the application site (Cadw reference: GM533).

- 2.9 A review of the Welsh Government (NRW) Development Advice Maps for flooding confirms that the site is located within Flood Zone A, and is not considered to be at risk of flooding. NRW's Flood Map For Planning further ascertains that the site is not at risk of surface water, rivers, or sea flooding.

Access

- 2.10 Pedestrian and vehicular access to the site can be achieved via a gated access to the south of the site via Hirwaun Road. A secondary informal access is also achieved to the west between Hirwaun Road and the residential property at 10 Ger-y-Bont. The site has been enclosed for security purposes, as such, access is restricted for private use.
- 2.11 The site sits in a highly sustainable position, close to a range of local services and facilities and well positioned in terms of access to sustainable transport modes such as local bus routes. The following facilities are considered to be within walking distance to the site: Penywaun Primary School (approx. 550m), Penywaun Community Centre and Recreation Ground (approx. 220m), Colliers Arms Pub (approx. 360m), Gwladys Street Play Area (approx. 370m, Penywaun Fish Bar (approx. 420m), and Alan's Convenience Store (approx. 510m).
- 2.12 The nearest bus stop is located within circa 260m of the site on Gwladys Street which provides regular services to the surrounding area (e.g., including Merthyr Tydfil, Aberdare, Glynneath and Cwmaman via the no. 8, 9, 89 and 91 buses).
- 2.13 A review of Rhondda Cynon Taf's Public Rights of Way Definitive Map shows that there are no Public Rights of Way footpaths in close proximity to the site, with the nearest located approximately 220m south of the site (route code AUN/12/1).

Surrounding Context

- 2.14 As previously indicated, the surrounding context is largely residential, with residential properties adjoining the west and north of the site. Employment and leisure uses are located to the east of the site, while agricultural land is located opposite the site on the other side of Hirwaun Road.
- 2.15 A review of Welsh Government data on active travel indicates that the nearest identified active travel network is located approximately 800m to the north-east of the pre-application site, running adjacent to the Avon Cynon (reference: RCTAT22o).
- 2.16 Penywaun is classified as a 'Smaller Settlement', as per the Rhondda Cynon Taf County Borough Council Local Development Plan. Smaller

Settlements such as Penywaun are identified for a small proportion of new development, which provide a limited range of services to meet local needs, in order to support the role of Key Settlements such as nearby Hirwaun.

- 2.17 A notable offsite feature is the Afon Cynon / River Cynon located approximately at 430m to the north of the site.

Planning Context

Planning History

- 3.1 A review of Rhondda Cynon Taf County Borough Council's online planning register indicates that the site is subject to the following planning history:
- Ref: 83/0267 - 'Proposed petrol filling station'. Approved August 1983;
 - Ref: 88/0466 - 'Petrol filling station including sales kiosk and car show room and flat'. Approved December 1988;
 - Ref: 91/0609 - 'Petrol filling station including manager's flat'. Approved December 1991.
 - Ref: 03/1480 - 'Outline residential development (north site)'. Refused December 2003.
 - Ref: 04/1329/13 - 'Proposed housing development consisting of 8no. semi-detached houses and 2no. detached houses'. Approved September 2017.
 - Ref: 07/0566/15 - 'Variation of Condition 1(b) of outline planning permission 04/1329/13 by 2 year extension of periods for commencement of development, and submission for the approval of reserved matters'. Approved May 2007.
 - Ref: 08/1174/10 - 'The construction of 18no. dwellings and associated works'. Approved February 2010.
 - Ref: 14/1306/15/RVOC - 'Variation of Condition 1 of planning approval 08/1174 to extend the time period for commencement by a further five years'. Awaiting Decision – S06 agreement outstanding.

Pre-Application Enquiry with LPA

- 3.2 A pre-application enquiry was submitted by the applicant in April 2024 to demonstrate the site can readily accommodate 17no. dwellings, inclusive of 6no. 1-bedroom flats and 11no. 2-bedroom dwelling units, with associated works including parking, landscaping, biodiversity enhancements and engineering infrastructure.
- 3.3 The following pre-application response was provided by Rhondda Cynon Taf County Borough Council:

Principle of Development

In this case, the site is situated within the defined settlement boundary and within an established built-up area which is predominantly residential in character, although it is noted that a commercial unit is situated to the east of the site. The surrounding area benefits from a number of key local services and facilities, including a primary school, play/recreational areas and a convenience store. In addition to this, the site is within reasonable walking distance of bus stops which are situated on the main bus route through the Cynon Valley with regular services to Aberdare, Merthyr Tydfil, Rhigos and Glynneath. In light of this, it is considered that the site is positioned in a highly sustainable location.

Policy AW1 further supports residential development within defined settlement boundaries, providing that they would meet the minimum residential density of 30 dwellings per hectare, as set out in Policy NSA10. In this case, the proposal would provide a total of 17 no. units on a site measuring approximately 0.5 hectares, which generates a density of approximately 34 dwellings per hectare and which complies with Policy NSA10.

Policy NSA11 further requires proposals for residential development with 10 units or more to provide at least 10% of units as affordable housing. On the basis of the details submitted with the enquiry, it is understood that the proposal would result in all 17 units being offered for affordable housing and the proposal would therefore comply with Policy NSA11. Any successful planning application will be subject to a S106 Agreement to secure any affordable housing proposed.

Furthermore, a review of the planning history of the site reveals that planning permission for residential development has previously been granted with the most recent permission for the construction of 18no. dwellings expiring in February 2015. Whilst national planning policy has changed since the approval of the previous permission with the introduction of Planning Policy Wales Edition 12 and Future Wales – The National Plan 2040 (FW2040), the updated policy continues to have a clear emphasis for residential development in sustainable locations and within defined settlement boundaries. Nothing has changed in terms of the Rhondda Cynon Taf Local Development Plan and, as such, the principle of the proposed development is likely to be considered acceptable.

Character & Appearance

The site layout plan indicates that a total of 17 units would be constructed around a new internal estate road with access being from Hirwaun Road to the south. The units would be arranged in groups of either semi-detached pairs or links of 3 with each unit directly addressing the road or a shared private driveway.

Whilst the development would provide a housing density greater than that required by Policy NSA10, it is not considered that the development would lead to overdevelopment of the site. The Proposed Site Layout Plan provided with the enquiry demonstrates that 17 no. units could reasonably be accommodated within the site with adequate space provided for off-street car parking and either private or shared outdoor space.

Notwithstanding this, the development would be accessed directly off Hirwaun Road to the south and, as a result of this, it would not connect with the existing residential settlement to the north and west. There is some concern in this regard as the development would not have a positive relationship with the surrounding area and it would appear completely detached from the existing pattern of development. It is considered that a development with access from Ger-y-Bont to the west of the site may be more appropriate as this would provide a clear relationship with the existing settlement.

In terms of the scale and design of the proposed units, the submitted plans indicate that the dwellings would be arranged in semi-detached pairs or links of 3 with a height that appears to be of a two-storey scale, which is considered acceptable. No details have been provided to indicate the proposed finish of the proposed dwellings, however, a scheme that would match or complement the finishing materials visible in the surrounding area is likely to be acceptable.

Ecology

The submitted Preliminary Ecology Assessment refers to a 2014 survey and from reading the previous survey, it is noted that the site may have at least locally valuable wildflower and invertebrate habitat and it might also function as steppingstone habitat for the marsh fritillary butterfly (a priority species in this part of RCT). It will also be of value as nesting bird habitat and may support reptiles. The site is also quite close to a recently discovered dormouse colony, which lies on the northern site of Penywaun, and the dormouse potential of the area of scrub would require more assessment/consideration within any future planning application submission.

The mitigation and enhancement proposals set out in the PEA identifies how reptile and nesting bird fatalities will be avoided but it offers no effective mitigation for the loss of grassland and scrub habitat. As per Welsh Government planning requirements, development of the site needs to deliver appropriate and effective biodiversity gain and enhancement, and based on the ecological assessment and layout proposals submitted, it is not considered that that provision can be evidenced through the information submitted.

As such, should a planning application be forthcoming, there would be a need for more ecological assessment work and a more effective scheme of habitat mitigation and enhancement provision. It is considered that whether development of the scale proposed could deliver effective ecological mitigation and enhancement would be a key assessment issue for any future planning application.

Drainage

Consultation has been undertaken with the Council's Flood Risk Management team in order to determine the potential impact of the proposal upon land drainage. The comments received indicate that the development would result in a total construction area of over 100 square metres and, as such, under Schedule 3 of the Flood and Water Management Act 2010, the applicant will be required to submit an application to the Sustainable Drainage Systems (SuDs) Approval Body (SAB). The development would also be required to comply with Part H of the Building Regulations.

A review of Natural Resources Wales' Surface Water Flood Risk maps reveals that there is high, medium and low surface water flood risk associated with an unnamed ordinary water course conveyance route located southwest of the site.

It is noted that the enquiry includes a surface water drainage plan however, the Council's Flood Risk Management Officer considers that further information will be required in the submission of any future planning application to demonstrate how surface water will be managed. This information may include a drainage strategy with associated calculations demonstrating the pre and post surface water discharge rates from the site and a general arrangement of the catchment and proposed drainage system. Failing this, a condition may be added to any grant of planning consent for this information to be submitted for approval prior to the commencement of works.

Contaminated Land

The Council's Public Health Department have indicated that a spoil heap previously occupied the site. It is therefore considered that there is potential for contamination to exist on site, and it is recommended that any future planning application be accompanied by a Site Investigation Report/a scheme to deal with contamination to negate the need for standard contaminated land condition to be imposed upon any potential grant of planning permission.

High Coal Risk Area

The site is located in a Development High Risk Area in respect of historic coal mining and any future planning application would be required to be supported by a Coal Mining Risk Assessment.

Highways

Access

The application proposes direct access off the A4059 which is a principle classified road and part of the Council's strategic road network with a 40mph speed limit and carrying substantial amount of vehicular traffic. This section of the A4059 is characterised by limited frontage development with heavily restricted access to serve the function of the road in providing for free movement of traffic. There are already two access points in close proximity to the site serving the existing housing development of Penywaun. The existing access to the south has a right hand turning lane to maintain free flow of traffic on the principle route A4059 with the existing access to the North configured as signalised junction to minimise disruption on the principle route A4059.

Automatic Traffic Counts (ATC) undertaken in 2021 indicate an average two-way weekly traffic count of 16000 vehicles. The Highway Authority contends that an additional access on the principle route A4059 at this location would increase delays and create hazards to the detriment of safety of all highway users. Given the speed limit, volume of traffic, road classification, strategic importance and characteristics of the section of the A4059 fronting the development site Manual for Streets would not be applicable.

There is a general presumption against further individual accesses to "Principal" roads, which would adversely impact free flow of traffic and create additional further hazards, to the detriment of safety and free flow of traffic.

Priority Junction

Previous planning consents (2008 & 2014) for the site included an approved access off Glan Y Bont which was conditioned to provide an acceptable access to the application site and acceptable for the number of additional dwellings proposed.

Given the speed limit, volume of traffic, road classification, strategic importance and characteristics of the section of the A4059 fronting the development site Manual for Streets would not be applicable to the junction design which should be broadly in accordance with DMRB guidance.

Minimising the number of junctions on a road can be achieved by connecting side roads and accesses to a collector road running parallel to the main road.

Should direct access to the development be required from the A4059 the council would require the junction to provide a right-hand turning lane/ left hand splay to minimise delay to through traffic and remove hazards caused by vehicles entering and leaving the development.

The selection of priority junction and major road central treatment for single carriageway roads should be determined based on the standard of major road and traffic flows on both the major and minor roads. Figure 2.3.1 illustrates approximate levels of provision for varying traffic flows.

The 2-way AADT design year flows are used to determine the approximate level of junction provision prior to more detailed traffic modelling to check capacity.

The two-way AADT is in excess of 13000 vehicles on the major arm and would therefore require a right hand turning lane in accordance with Design Manual for Roads and Bridges to mitigate the safety and capacity impact of the proposed junction.

Accident Data

The accident data submitted within the Technical Note identifies a number of Personal Injury Accidents at the periphery of the study area associated with rear shunt collisions associated with right turning manoeuvres and vehicles stopping. Such causal factors would arise by provision of a junction providing access to the proposed development which gives cause for concern.

Vision Splays

The proposed access is shown with visibility splays of 2.4m x 90m, which are acceptable for a road with a 40mph speed limit in accordance with TAN 18.

Parking SPG Access, Circulation & Parking 2011 & Flats 2015.

The off-street car parking provision of 1 space per 1 bed apartment and 2 spaces per 2 bed dwelling are acceptable and accord with the above parking guidance.

Conclusion

The proposed new single point of access served off the principal route A4059 in close proximity to the two existing access points serving Penywaun Estate will increase delays on the principal route and increase hazards to the detriment of safety of all highway users.

The number of priority junctions providing access to the all-purpose trunk roads should be minimised.

There is a general presumption against further individual accesses to "Principal" roads, which would create additional further hazards, to the detriment of safety and free flow of traffic.

The previous planning permissions (2008 & 2014) for the site included an approved access off Glan Y Bont which was designed and conditioned to access the application site and acceptable for the number of additional dwellings proposed.

Manual for Streets is guidance note regarding design of streets with slow speeds and active frontage and not a principal route A4059 with 40Mph speed limit.

NOTE

Sympathetic consideration would be given to an application that provided direct vehicular access off Glan Y Bont as previously conditioned and approved.

Pre-Application Consultation

- 3.4 In accordance with Part 1A of 'The Town and Country Planning (Development Management Procedures) (Wales) (Amended) Order 2016" (DMPO 2016), all major developments are required to be subject of pre-application consultation, prior to the Planning Application being validated by the Local Planning Authority.
- 3.5 Accordingly, statutory Pre-Application Consultation is to be held between the 18th September to the 16th October 2024, where all statutory, community and 'other' consultees are invited to view the submission package and provide their comments. Further details on the PAC process and comments, once received, are to be provided within a PAC Report which will accompany a full planning application. This will also set out how these comments have shaped the scheme

since, and will be included within an amended Design and Access Statement upon submission of a full planning application.

SAB Pre-App

- 3.6 At the time of preparing this statement initial discussions with the SAB engineer have been undertaken, however, no official pre-application submission has been made. Through the process of these discussions and subsequent site investigation the SuDs design will be further developed and established.

Proposed Development

Amount, Scale and Layout

- 4.1 The accompanying layout demonstrates a total of 17no. residential units can be accommodated within the site, with green open space throughout the proposed layout. The development is to be served by an internal roadway accessed off Hirwaun Road, designed to adoptable standards, culminating in a turning head arrangement to the east of the site.
- 4.2 The proposed development comprises a mix of one, two, and four bedroom units with the specific mix proposed as follows;
- 6no. 1-bedroom (two person) units;
 - 11no. 2-bedroom (four person) units;
- 4.3 As the properties are to be affordable and their development dependent on Welsh Government grant funding, the homes will be designed to accord with Welsh Development Quality Requirements 2021 (WDQR 2021).
- 4.4 In line with the predominant character of dwellings found within Penywaun, the homes are designed to rise no higher than two storeys to ensure a positive relationship with the nearby properties on Ger-y-Bont, which are two storey semi-detached properties. Each property is afforded its own private garden area and level access. The accompanying layout has been formulated to incorporate the slight increase in gradient found at the north-east of the site.
- 4.5 The properties are largely designed near the perimeter of the site, with primary access facilitated by Hirwaun Road to the south of the site. Secondary (pedestrian) access is proposed at the west of the site, off Ger-y-Bont. The internal road is proposed to be adopted for the initial part, with a private road established to the east of the site in order to facilitate access to some of the dwellings (Plots 8-13, 14, 15). This is proposed to establish a better layout for the site which is not over-dominant within an engineered landscape.
- 4.6 Due to the proximity of existing residential properties to the west, suitable separation distances will be established throughout the site, this is especially pertinent to the west and north of the site.
- 4.7 In terms of density, the adopted LDP specifies that all housing development proposals should seek to make the most sustainable and efficient use of land and advocates a minimum density of 30 dwellings per hectare on all sites within the defined Northern Strategy Area, which includes Penywaun.
- 4.8 This development proposes a dwelling density of 34 dph, which is influenced by the site's irregular shape and topography. The proposed density of 34 dph is considered to be appropriate with

regard to the site's location in the centre of Penywaun. The proposed development aims to maximise the number of affordable units achievable across the site, whilst providing appropriate landscaping, amenity, and garden spaces.

Roads, Access and Parking

- 4.9 The proposed development includes an access road off Hirwaun Road which has been designed to adoptable standards with a 5.5m carriageway and footways included on one or both sides of the internal access roads for its entire lengths.
- 4.10 With reference to the provision of car parking spaces, the properties are afforded one space per bedroom, in line with CSS Wales Parking Standards 2008. An additional space is proposed for visitor parking, cumulating in a total of 28 car parking spaces proposed.
- 4.11 All parking for the proposed dwellings will be located along the front elevation and will be designed for electrical vehicle charging.

Landscaping and Biodiversity Enhancements

- 4.12 Biodiversity enhancement opportunities have been incorporated into the detailed design of the development, in line with the objectives detailed within the Environment (Wales) Act which places a duty on Local Planning Authorities to conserve and enhance biodiversity.
- 4.13 This planning application is accompanied by a Green Infrastructure Statement (Tirlun Design Associates), which, as required by national planning policy, sets out how biodiversity and green infrastructure are being enhanced as part of the proposed development.
- 4.14 As established within the accompanying GI Statement, the landscape proposal for the site seeks to retain existing treeline on the south-western site boundary. This to be enhanced across the site through the planting of native and non-native tree and plant species across the site, in particular at the west of the site near to the rear of properties off Ger-y-Bont and at the east of the site through hedgerow planting.
- 4.15 A range of herbaceous and shrub plants will be provided throughout the site to increase amenity and biodiversity of the site. Tree planting will be planted to help cool the land during the summer months and provide structural interest in the winter. Where appropriate, native tree planting will be provided. The drainage proposals include swales to the south and east of the site, with permeable paving provided on the private drive areas. The swale will be seeded appropriately with a species-rich grass mix suitable for damp and dry conditions.
- 4.16 The development proposals have considered the existing green infrastructure on the site, particularly the existing ecology and proposed vegetation. Mitigation and enhancements include appropriate measures for avoidance of impacts on bats, planting of

new trees, shrub planting, species rich seeding and the installation of bat and bird boxes. These new features would contribute to the wider green infrastructure of the site and local context, whilst enhancing biodiversity.

Planning Policy Context

Introduction

5.1 Section 38(6) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 requires that planning applications be determined in accordance with the Development Plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise. The Development Plan for the purposes of this Planning Application comprises the following:

- National Development Framework: Future Wales – The National Plan 2040 (February, 2021);
- The Rhondda Cynon Taf County Borough Council Local Development Plan 2006-2021 (Adopted March 2011).

5.2 In addition to the Development Plan, the Planning Application has been informed by policy and guidance set out in the following:

- Planning Policy Wales Edition 12 (February, 2024), informed by The Well-Being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015, and supplemented by Technical Advice Notes;
- Building Better Places: The Planning System Delivering Resilient and Brighter Futures (July, 2020);
- Rhondda Cynon Taf County Borough Council Supplementary Planning Guidance (SPG)

5.3 This section of the Planning Statement provides an overview of the Development Plan context and planning policy framework of specific relevance to the determination of this application. For ease of reference, this overview is set out below at the national and local level.

Wellbeing of Future Generations Act

5.4 The Well-Being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015 (which came into force on 1st April 2016) requires “*public bodies to do things in pursuit of the economic, social, environmental and cultural well-being of Wales in a way that accords with the sustainable development principle*”. The Act sets out seven ‘well-being’ goals as follows:

• *A prosperous Wales: An innovative, productive and low carbon society which recognises the limits of the global environment and therefore uses resources efficiently and proportionately (including acting on climate change); and which develops a skilled and well-educated population in an economy which generates wealth and provides employment opportunities, allowing people to take advantage of the wealth generated through securing decent work.*

• *A resilient Wales: A nation which maintains and enhances a biodiverse natural environment with healthy functioning ecosystems that support social, economic and ecological resilience and the capacity to adapt to change (for example climate change).*

- *A healthier Wales: A society in which people’s physical and mental well-being is maximised and in which choices and behaviours that benefit future health are understood.*
- *A more equal Wales: A society that enables people to fulfil their potential no matter what their background or circumstances (including their socio-economic background and circumstances).*
- *A Wales of cohesive communities: Attractive, viable, safe and well-connected communities.*
- *A Wales of vibrant culture and thriving Welsh language: A society that promotes and protects culture, heritage and the Welsh language, and which encourages people to participate in the arts, and sports and recreation.*
- *A globally responsive Wales: A nation which, when doing anything to improve the economic, social, environmental and cultural well-being of Wales, takes account of whether doing such a thing may make a positive contribution to global wellbeing.*

5.5 Within the Act, sustainable development is defined as follows: “the process of improving the economic, social, environmental and cultural well-being of Wales by taking action, in accordance with the sustainable development principle, aimed at achieving the well-being goals”. The Act sets out that when making decisions, public bodies need to take into account the impact they could have on people living in Wales in the future and must apply the sustainable development principle in all decisions.



National Development Framework: Future Wales – The National Plan 2040

5.6 The National Development Framework: Future Wales – the National Plan 2040 was published on 24th February 2021. ‘Future Wales’ sets out the Welsh Government’s strategy for addressing key national priorities through the planning system, including sustaining and

developing a vibrant economy; achieving decarbonisation and climate-resilience; developing strong ecosystems; and improving the health and well-being of our communities.

- 5.7 Future Wales sets out its overarching ambitions based on the national planning principles and national sustainable placemaking outcomes set out in Planning Policy Wales by means of 11 Outcomes. As set out on Page 52 of Future Wales, the 11 Outcomes are collectively a statement of where the Welsh Government aspire Wales to be in 20 years' time, as follows:

A Wales where people live:

1. *...and work in connected, inclusive and healthy places*
2. *...in vibrant rural places with access to homes, jobs and services*
3. *...in distinctive regions that tackle health and socio-economic inequality through sustainable growth*
4. *...in places with a thriving Welsh Language*
5. *...and work in towns and cities which are a focus and springboard for sustainable growth*
6. *...in places where prosperity, innovation and culture are promoted*
7. *...in places where travel is sustainable*
8. *...in places with world-class digital infrastructure*
9. *...in places that sustainably manage their natural resources and reduce pollution*
10. *...in places with biodiverse, resilient and connected ecosystems*
11. *...in places which are decarbonised and climate-resilient.*

- 5.8 On urban growth, Policy 2 of Future Wales states:

Urban growth and regeneration should be based on the following strategic placemaking principles:

- *creating a rich mix of uses;*
- *providing a variety of housing types and tenures;*
- *building places at a walkable scale, with homes, local facilities and public transport within walking distance of each other;*
- *increasing population density, with development built at urban densities that can support public transport and local facilities;*
- *establishing a permeable network of streets, with a hierarchy that informs the nature of development;*
- *promoting a plot-based approach to development, which provides opportunities for the development of small plots, including for custom and self-builders; and*
- *integrating green infrastructure, informed by the planning authority's Green Infrastructure Assessment.*

Planning authorities should use development plans to establish a vision for each town and city. This should be supported by a spatial framework that guides growth and regeneration, and establishes a structure within which towns and cities can grow, evolve, diversify and flourish over time."

Housing

5.9 It is stated at Page 73 of Future Wales that *“the planning system has a long-established role in the delivery of affordable housing. We are committed to ensuring that new housing meets the needs of all members of society especially those unable to afford to buy on the open market. Echoing the strategic placemaking principles in policy 2, sustainable places are inclusive and welcoming to all; they do not exclude sections of the community or create ghettos of the affluent and the poor.”*

5.10 Policy 7 is of key relevance in regard to the delivery of affordable housing, which states the following:

“The Welsh Government will increase delivery of affordable homes by ensuring that funding for these homes is effectively allocated and utilised. Through their Strategic and Local Development Plans planning authorities should develop strong evidence based policy frameworks to deliver affordable housing, including setting development plan targets based on regional estimates of housing need and local assessments. In response to local and regional needs, planning authorities should identify sites for affordable housing led developments and explore all opportunities to increase the supply of affordable housing.”

Placemaking

5.11 Placemaking forms a key concept upon which many national planning policies are based. It is set out at Page 65 of Future Wales that *“Placemaking is at the heart of the planning system in Wales and this policy establishes a strategic placemaking approach and principles to support planning authorities to shape urban growth and regeneration”*.

Biodiversity and Green Infrastructure

5.12 It is identified at Page 76 that the strategic focus of Future Wales on urban growth requires *“an increased emphasis on biodiversity enhancement (net benefit) in order to ensure that growth is sustainable”* (page 76).

5.13 In addition, the associated importance of green infrastructure is highlighted: *“As the population of Wales becomes increasingly urban, the opportunity to optimise well-being benefits from green infrastructure will be greatest in and around these areas. Innovative use of nature-based solutions and integrating green infrastructure in and around urban areas can help restore natural features and processes into cities and landscapes. Providing locally accessible, high quality green spaces and corridors helps to maintain and enhance the strategic functioning of our natural resources and ecological networks and address physical and mental well-being”* (page 78).

5.14 Policy 9 of Future Wales is of key relevance in regard to green infrastructure and biodiversity enhancement, which states the following:

“To ensure the enhancement of biodiversity, the resilience of ecosystems and the provision of green infrastructure, the Welsh Government will work with key partners to:

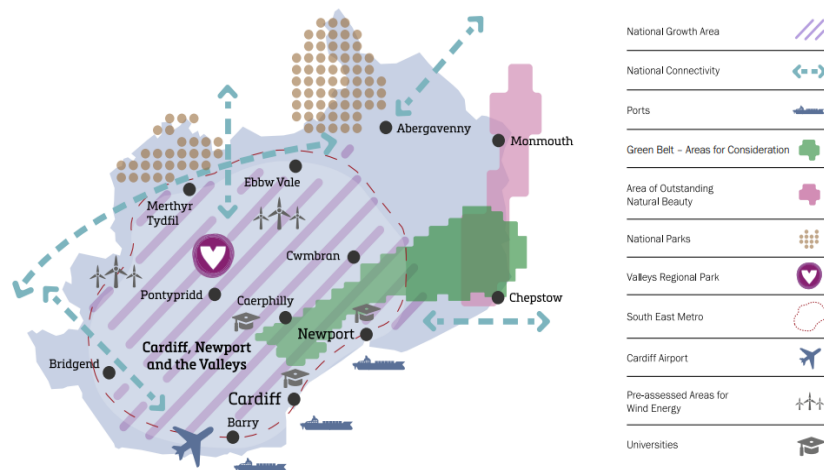
- identify areas which should be safeguarded and created as ecological networks for their importance for adaptation to climate change, for habitat protection, restoration or creation, to protect species, or which provide key ecosystems services, to ensure they are not unduly compromised by future development; and*
- identify opportunities where existing and potential green infrastructure could be maximised as part of placemaking, requiring the use of nature-based solutions as a key mechanism for securing sustainable growth, ecological connectivity, social equality and well-being.*

5.15 In respect of climate change, Future Wales confirms that:

“It is vital that we reduce our emissions to protect our own well-being and to demonstrate our global responsibility. Future Wales, together with Planning Policy Wales will ensure the planning system focuses on delivering a decarbonised and resilient Wales through the places we create, the energy we generate, the natural resources and materials we use, and how we live and travel.”

5.16 Finally, Policy 33 identifies Penywaun to be within the South East Wales Region, which is the National Growth Area for Wales. This area is the main focus for growth and investment within Wales, where residential and other forms of development for socio-economic growth are targeted.

Regional strategic diagram



5.17 Regarding the Valleys, Policy 33 ‘National Growth Area – Cardiff, Newport, and the Valleys’ states:

“The Welsh Government supports co-ordinated regeneration and investment in the Valleys area to improve well-being, increase prosperity and address social inequalities. The Welsh Government will

work with regional bodies, local authorities, businesses, the third sector, agencies and stakeholders to support investment, including in the manufacturing sector, and to ensure a regional approach is taken to addressing socio-economic issues in the Valleys.”

Planning Policy Wales, Edition 12

- 5.18 Planning Policy Wales (PPW) Edition 12 was published on 7th February 2024. The primary objective of PPW is to ensure that the planning system contributes towards the delivery of sustainable development and improves the social, economic, environmental and cultural well-being of Wales, as required by the Planning (Wales) Act 2015, the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015.
- 5.19 Sustainable Development is defined at Page 7 of PPW as follows: *“the process of improving the economic, social, environmental and cultural well-being of Wales by taking action, in accordance with the sustainable development principle, aimed at achieving the well-being goals”.*
- 5.20 Paragraph 1.18 sets out that *“Legislation secures a presumption in favour of sustainable development in accordance with the development plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise to ensure that social, economic, cultural and environmental issues are balanced and integrated”*
- 5.21 In accordance with the National Development Framework, placemaking is also at the heart of PPW – Paragraph 2.1 for example, states that *“Everyone engaged with or operating within the planning system in Wales must embrace the concept of placemaking in both plan making and development management decisions in order to achieve the creation of sustainable places and improve the well-being of communities”.*
- 5.22 Paragraph 2.3 of PPW states that *“The planning system should create sustainable places which are attractive, sociable, accessible, active, secure, welcoming, healthy and friendly. Development proposals should create the conditions to bring people together, making them want to live, work and play in areas with a sense of place and well-being, creating prosperity for all”.*
- 5.23 PPW states that previously developed (‘brownfield’) land should be used in preference, where possible, over greenfield land. In settlements, such land should generally be considered suitable for appropriate development where its re-use will promote sustainability principles and any constraints can be overcome.
- 5.24 Section 3 – Strategic and Spatial Choices, states that *“effective strategic placemaking requires early collective consideration of placemaking issues at the outset, in the formulation of a development plan, or when developing specific proposals. The policy issues should not be considered in isolation from one another. Section 5 – Productive*

and Enterprising Places covers the economic components of placemaking which promote the economic, social, environmental and cultural well-being by providing well-connected employment and sustainable economic development. These places are designed and sited to promote healthy lifestyles and tackle climate change” [3.1].

- 5.25 The importance of good design in development proposals is highlighted in Paragraph 3.3 of PPW, which states:

“Good design is fundamental to creating sustainable places where people want to live, work and socialise. Design is not just about the architecture of a building but the relationship between all elements of the natural and built environment and between people and places. To achieve sustainable development, design must go beyond aesthetics and include the social, economic, environmental, cultural aspects of the development, including how space is used, how buildings and the public realm support this use, as well as its construction, operation, management, and its relationship with the surrounding area”.

- 5.26 It is set out at Paragraph 4.2.1 that *“New housing development in both urban and rural areas should incorporate a mix of market and affordable house types, tenures and sizes to cater for the range of identified housing needs and contribute to the development of sustainable and cohesive communities”*

- 5.27 The importance of considering SuDs as an integral part of the development process is highlighted at Paragraph 6.6.18 of PPW where it is stated that:

“The provision of SuDS must be considered at the earliest possible stage when formulating proposals for new development”. It is advised at Paragraph 6.6.19 that “Design for multiple benefits and green infrastructure should be secured wherever possible and as part of Green Infrastructure Assessments suitable approaches towards the provision of SuDS should be identified”.

- 5.28 Regarding Green Infrastructure, Paragraph 6.2.11 of PPW advises:

“The development proposals have considered the existing green infrastructure on the site, particularly the existing ecology and proposed vegetation. Mitigation and enhancements include appropriate measures for avoidance of impacts on bats, planting of new trees, shrub planting, species rich seeding, the installation of bat and bird boxes and hedgehog fence gaps. A swale is provided along the southern boundary of the site. These new features would contribute to the wider green infrastructure of the site and local context, whilst enhancing biodiversity.”

- 5.29 Paragraph 6.2.12 of PPW (12th Edition) states that a Green Infrastructure statement should be submitted with all planning applications. This should *“be proportionate to the scale and nature of*

the development proposed” and “will describe how green infrastructure has been incorporated into the proposal.”

Technical Advice Notes

- 5.30 The following Technical Advice Notes (TANS) are of relevance to the proposed development.
- 5.31 *TAN2 ‘Planning and Affordable Housing’* provides advice on how the planning system, and local planning authorities, can adopt an affordable housing target within a local development plan that shapes local development policy and growth aims, based on the needs identified within needs assessments carried out.
- 5.32 *TAN5 Nature Conservation and Planning (2009)* provides advice about how the land use planning system should contribute to protecting and enhancing biodiversity and geological conservation. It seeks to demonstrate how local planning authorities, developers and key stakeholders in conservation can work together to deliver more sustainable development that does not result in losses from the natural heritage but instead takes every opportunity to enhance it.
- 5.33 *TAN12 Design (2016)* provides advice on how ‘promoting sustainability through good design’ and ‘planning for sustainable building’ may be facilitated through the planning system.
- 5.34 *TAN 18 ‘Transport’ (2007)* offers national guidance on transportation related planning policies, and advises that it should be read in conjunction with Manual for Streets. It advocates the integration of land use planning and transport in order to promote resource and travel efficient settlement patterns, ensuring that development is located in areas of good accessibility, and managing parking provision.”

Local Level

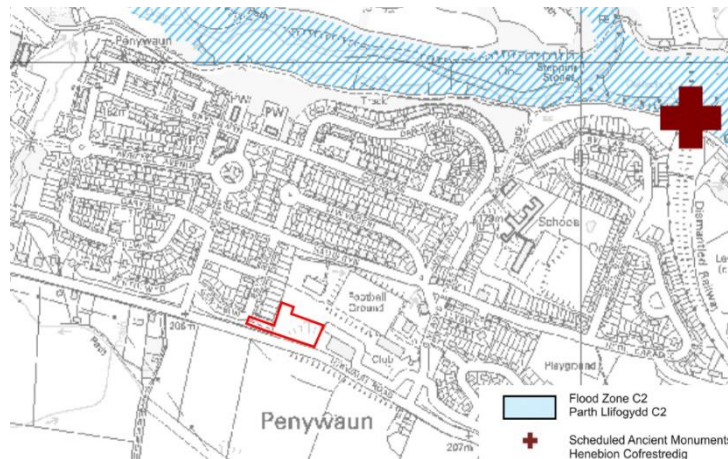
Rhondda Cynon Taf County Borough Council Local Development Plan 2006-2026

- 5.35 The Rhondda Cynon Taf County Borough Council Local Development Plan was adopted in March 2011 and is the prevailing development plan for the county borough. As such, it is a material consideration for planning applications within Rhondda Cynon Taf.
- 5.36 As shown below, The Rhondda Cynon Taf Local Development Plan Proposals Map indicates that the site is situated within the defined settlement boundary for Penywaun and is not subject to any policy designations or development allocations.
- 5.37 Penywaun is a defined Small Settlement within RCT, as outlined within paragraph 4.16 of the Local Development Plan.
- 5.38 Therefore, the site is classified as vacant brownfield land, which is located within the defined settlement boundary and is not subject to

any land-use allocations for development.



5.39 The Rhondda Cynon Taf Local Development Plan Constraints Map indicates that the application site is not subject to any identified constraints.



5.40 In light of the above, the following Local Development Plan policies are considered relevant in the context of the proposed development:

Policy Reference	Referring to
Core Strategy Policies	
CS1	Development in the North
CS5	Affordable Housing
Area Wide Policies	
AW1	Supply of New Housing
AW2	Sustainable Locations
AW5	New Development
AW6	Design and Placemaking
AW8	Protection and Enhancement of the Natural Environment
AW10	Environmental Protection and Public Health
Strategy Area Policies	
NSA 10	Housing Density

NSA 11	Affordable Housing
NSA 12	Housing Development Within and Adjacent to Settlement Boundaries

5.41 Policy CS1 'Development in the North' advises how strong, sustainable growth will be achieved in the north of RCT. This states:

"In the Northern Strategy Area the emphasis will be on building strong, sustainable communities. This will be achieved by:

- 1. Promoting residential and commercial development in locations which will support and reinforce the roles of Principal Towns and Key Settlements;*
- 2. Providing high quality, affordable accommodation that promotes diversity in the residential market;*
- 3. Ensuring the removal and remediation of dereliction by promoting the re-use of under used and previously developed land and buildings;*
- 4. Promoting large scale regeneration schemes in the Principal Town of Aberdare and in the Key Settlements of Mountain Ash, Ferndale and Treorchy;*
- 5. Promoting accessibility by securing investment in new roads, public transport improvements, walking and cycling;*
- 6. Encouraging a strong, diverse economy which supports traditional employment and promotes new forms of employment in the leisure and tourism sectors;*
- 7. Protecting the cultural identity of the Strategy Area by protecting historic built heritage and the natural environment;*
- 8. Promoting and enhancing transport infrastructure services to support growth and investment, and*
- 9. Reducing daily out commuting by private car and promoting sustainable forms of travel."*

5.42 On affordable housing delivery within Rhondda Cynon Taf, Policy CS5 'Affordable Housing' advises:

"The housing requirements identified in Policy CS 4 will be expected to contribute to established community housing need by providing 1770 affordable units over the plan period."

5.43 Policy AW1 'Supply of New Housing' identifies that between 14,936-15,386 dwellings are required to be delivered across the county borough during the development plan period. This is to be achieved through:

- "1. The allocations of this plan;*
- 2. The development of sites in Rhondda Cynon Taf where planning permission for housing has been granted since 1st June 2006;*
- 3. The development of unallocated land within the defined settlement boundaries of the Principal Towns, Key Settlements and Smaller Settlements;*
- 4. The provision of affordable housing;*

5. The conversion of suitable structures to provide housing; and
6. The development of land at density levels which accord with the requirements of Policies NSA 10 and SSA 11."

- 5.44 Policy AW2 'Sustainable Locations' of the LDP states that new development on unallocated sites will only be supported in sustainable locations. Sustainable locations are defined as locations which:
1. "Are within the defined settlement boundary or in the Northern Strategy Area, accord with Policy NSA 12;
 2. Would not unacceptably conflict with surrounding uses;
 3. Have good accessibility by a range of sustainable transport options;
 4. Have good access to key services and facilities;
 5. Do not permit highly vulnerable development and Emergency Services within Zone C2 floodplain. Within Zone C development will be permitted where it can be justified that: -
 - a. It is necessary to assist the regeneration of a Principal Town or Key Settlement including the key employment objectives or where development involves a large brownfield site;
 - b. The potential consequences of a flooding event have been considered and found to be acceptable in accordance with national guidance;
 6. Support the roles and functions of the Principal Towns, Key Settlements, and Small Settlements;
 7. Support the development of the 8 strategic sites;
 8. Are well related to existing water, sewerage, waste, electrical, gas, and telecommunications infrastructure and improvements to such services will be provided where necessary;
 9. Where proposals relate to existing buildings in the countryside, accord with Policy AW9."
- 5.45 New development proposals will only be permitted where they satisfy a range of criteria, including matters relating to design, scale, amenity, and accessibility, as per LDP Policy AW5 'New Development'.
- 5.46 Similarly, Policy AW6 'Design and Placemaking' states that development proposals will only be supported where they satisfy a range of design-related criteria. This includes (inter alia) being of high-quality, distinctiveness design, being appropriate in terms of size and scale, being reflective of the local character, enhance the immediate and wider landscaping context, and are accessible and legible.
- 5.47 Policy AW8 'Protection and Enhancement of the Natural Environment' sets out that the county borough's distinctive natural heritage will be preserved and enhanced through protection from inappropriate development.

5.48 On local health and amenity, Policy AW10 'Environmental Protection and Public Health' states:

"Development proposals will not be permitted where they would cause or result in a risk of unacceptable harm to health and/or local amenity because of:

- 1. Air pollution;*
- 2. Noise pollution;*
- 3. Light pollution;*
- 4. Contamination;*
- 5. Landfill gas;*
- 6. Land instability;*
- 7. Water pollution;*
- 8. Flooding;*
- 9. Or any other identified risk to the environment, local amenity, and public health or safety.*

Unless it can be demonstrated that measures can be taken to overcome any significant adverse risk to public health, the environment, and/or impact upon local amenity."

5.49 On the housing density for new residential development within the Northern Strategy Area, Policy NSA10 'Housing Density' confirms that a minimum density of 30 dwellings per hectare (dph) should be achieved. Lower density levels may be permitted where it can be demonstrated that *"1. They are necessary to protect the character of the site or surrounding area' 2. They are necessary to protect the amenity of existing or future residents; and 3. They still make adequately efficient use of the site."*

5.50 Policy NSA11 'Affordable Housing' states that the provision of at least 10% affordable housing will be sought on developments proposed of 10 units or more within the Northern Strategy Area.

5.51 Finally, Policy NSA12 'Housing Development Within and Adjacent to Settlement Boundaries' states:

"Development in the Northern Strategy Area will be permitted within the defined settlement boundaries where it can be demonstrated that:

- 1. The proposed development does not adversely effect the provision of open space;*
- 2. The proposed development does not adversely affect the highway network and is accessible to local services by a range of modes of transport, on foot or by cycle;*
- 3. The proposed development does not adversely affect the provision of car parking in the surrounding area; and*
- 4. Where sites are contaminated or subject to land instability, adequate remediation can be achieved; In addition, proposals for residential*

development outside but adjoining the defined settlement boundary will be permitted where it can be demonstrated that:

- 5. The proposal does not result in the construction of more than 10 dwellings;*
- 6. The site is bounded on at least one side by the defined settlement boundary and the scale, form and design of the proposed development does not adversely affect the amenity or character of the site, surrounding or wider area;*
- 7. The proposed development is not within a green wedge or a site designated for international, national or local importance.*

Development proposals in the identified area of Aberdare will only be permitted within the defined settlement boundary.

Development proposals outside and adjoining the defined settlement boundary of Aberdare will not be permitted.

Development proposals within and / or adjoining the defined settlement boundaries around the Strategic Sites defined by Policy CS 3 will only be permitted where they will not prejudice the development of the Strategic Sites."

Supplementary Planning Guidance

5.52 The following Supplementary Planning Guidance (SPG) adopted by Rhondda Cynon Taf County Borough Council is of relevance to the proposed development:

- Access Circulation and Parking SPG (March 2011);
- Affordable Housing SPG (Adopted March 2011);
- Design and Placemaking SPG (Adopted March 2011);
- Development of Flats SPG (Adopted June 2015);
- Nature Conservation SPG (Adopted March 2011);
- The Historic Built Environment SPG (Adopted March 2011);

Appraisal

Overview

6.1 This section aims to identify the main issues relevant to the determination of the application and assess the scheme against the relevant planning policy framework. These matters are considered to be as follows:

- **Principle of Development**
- Impact of the development on the **character of the surrounding area.**
- The impact of the development on the **amenity of surrounding residential properties.**
- The impact of the development on the **local highway network.**
- The impact of the development on **biodiversity and the local landscape.**

Principle of Development

6.2 PPW states that planning applications must be determined in line with the adopted local development plan, unless material considerations indicate otherwise. As established, the application site is located within the defined settlement boundary for Penywaun and comprises previously developed 'brownfield' land within the settlement boundary, where development is encouraged to be located, as stipulated within national and local planning policy.

6.3 Penywaun is identified within the LDP as a 'Small Settlement' within the settlement hierarchy. The site is, therefore, well positioned in terms of proximity to a range of local services and facilities. The proposed mix of 17 units, inclusive of one-bedroom flats and two-bedroom dwellings is considered to be reflective of the local built context within Penywaun, which is characterised by semi-detached properties of a similar size.

6.4 On the matter of affordable housing, Policy NSA11 'Affordable Housing' confirms that the overall affordable housing requirement for this site would be a 10% provision. In the case of this planning application, a provision of 100% affordable housing would be delivered, and as such the proposed development is considered to be fully policy compliant with Policy NSA11. The provision of affordable dwellings would contribute towards achieving Rhondda Cynon Taf County Borough Council's ambitions to deliver the targeted figure of 415 dwellings within the Northern Strategy Area over the development plan period of 2006-2021.

6.5 As previously discussed, pre-application discussions with Rhondda Cynon Taf County Borough Council established that the proposed development is acceptable in principle and that fundamental compliance with Policy CS1 of the Rhondda Cynon Taf LDP is demonstrated.

6.6 On this basis, the application is considered to comply with national and local policies and the delivery of the site would provide an appropriate form of development which would comply with policies CS1, CS5, AW1, AW2, NSA11 and NSA12 of the adopted Local Development Plan.

Impact of Development on the Character of the Surrounding Area

6.7 As established, the site is located within the defined settlement boundary for Penywaun, within an established residential area. As such, the proposed residential development is considered appropriate in this setting and the resulting use of the site would conform to its surrounding uses.

6.8 The proposed layout plan demonstrates that the potential density of the site and its form, massing, and scale, are acceptable in reflecting the character of this part of the settlement, including existing properties on Ger-y-Bont and Bryn Rhos. As previously established, the surrounding residential context is largely semi-detached properties, consisting of heights of single and two storeys.

6.9 The density of the proposed development exceeds the minimum density requirement for new residential development set out within LDP Policy NSA10, which is recommended to exceed 30 dph. Despite the constraints of the site with regard to increasing topography to the north/northwest of the site, the proposed site layout has been calculated to achieve the maximum number of dwellings within the site boundary (17), while being responsive to the site's context and with regard to the amenity of future occupiers through providing sufficient amenity space and spacing between plots. On this basis, the density of the proposed development is considered to be acceptable. This has been agreed during pre-application discussion with the planning officer, with the formal pre-application response stating that the proposed delivery of 17no. units would not be considered to be overdevelopment of the site.

6.10 The proposal accommodates one-bedroom and two-bedroom properties. The development, therefore, satisfies the policy requirement to ensure a range of properties are delivered within the Northern Strategy Area, which will reflect the housing need in the area. This development, therefore, delivers homes where there is an identified need as written throughout the Local Development Plan and the Council's Local Housing Market Assessment (LHMA) for 2022/2023-2027/2028.

6.11 With regards to design, there is no predominant character in terms of architectural styles or material in the area with a varying delivery of brick, rendered and stone buildings plotted across the town. Accordingly, the material palette of red facing brick with light-coloured rendering and red coloured roofing is considered to be

acceptable and will ensure it assimilates into the residential context and is seen as an enhancement from the existing properties whilst also achieving a modern and high-quality design.

- 6.12 On this basis, the application is considered to be acceptable and will not have a detrimental impact on the character of the local area, with regard to amenity and design in accordance with Planning Policy Wales (Edition 12), TAN 12 'Design', and Local Development Plan Policies AW2, AW5, and AW6.

Impact of development on the Amenity of Surrounding Residential Properties

- 6.13 The proposed layout has been formulated to achieve appropriate amenity standards with each dwelling provided with external amenity areas and appropriate parking provision.
- 6.14 As indicated, the proposed layout aims to utilise the topography and setting of the surrounding area in order to mitigate any impacts associated with scale and overlooking. No significant amenity impacts are considered to arise with regard to privacy, overlooking, or overshadowing on any property within the site's vicinity. The development has been set from the boundary with the adjacent properties at Ger-y-Bont and has a positive relationship when considering the distance and the difference in gradients together with the retention of the existing trees in this location. As such, the scheme will have an acceptable relationship on the neighbouring residential context.
- 6.15 To conclude, the proposed development is not considered to generate any significant adverse impacts on the amenity of surrounding properties and is in line with planning policies AW5, AW6 and NSA 12 of the adopted LDP as well as the Supplementary Planning Guidance on Residential Design.

Impact on Green Infrastructure and Biodiversity

- 6.16 As indicated within the submitted Preliminary Ecological Appraisal (PEA) (Ecological Services Ltd), the site is not designated under any statutory or non-statutory designated sites within or adjacent to the site boundary. Features of biodiversity value have been identified along the hedgerows adjoining the site's southern and northern boundaries, with their potential to support species of local importance highlighted.
- 6.17 The Preliminary Ecological Appraisal (PEA) submitted as part of this planning application concludes that the development will not have a significant effect on the biodiversity opportunities providing that the below recommendations have been incorporated into the development. This includes:

- *Reptile refugia surveys are recommended on site. A standard approach to presence/ absence refugia surveys is to complete a minimum of*

seven site visits in suitable weather conditions and check artificial reptile refugia spread out across the survey site during the correct survey period. Survey refugia for reptiles can be made from a variety of materials but the most common material used is roofing felt cut into squares measuring at least 0.75 m by 0.5 m. The refugia mats should be given a minimum of 10 days to bed in before the first checks take place.

- *The rubble piles, scrub and tussocky areas of the semi-improved grassland within the site boundary are considered suitable for use by common reptile species. A reptile mitigation strategy is required to support any development works. The reptile mitigation strategy must include, but not be limited to:

 - o *Sensitive timings of works;*
 - o *A phased cut of suitable vegetation to naturally encourage reptiles to move away;*
 - o *Supervised destructive searching where necessary;*
 - o *Enhancement measures within any development plans to allow reptiles to recolonise the site.**
- *The scrub habitats on site have the potential for use by nesting birds. Any tree or scrub removal must be completed outside of nesting bird season (March to August inclusive). If this is not achievable an ecologist must inspect any vegetation with the potential for birds to be present for active nests prior to removal works beginning. If an active nest is identified a buffer zone of at least 5 m around the nest must be observed until chicks have fledged. Only then can vegetation be removed. Greater buffer zones around nests may be required depending on the species and habitat the nest is within.*
- *Ideally all excavations within the site will be securely covered over if left unattended. Any excavations that have a depth in excess of 0.5m and that are left open overnight will have a means of escape let for any mammals (e.g. hedgehog) that may fall into them. A wooden board or equivalent will be left from the bottom to the top of the hole at an angle no steeper than 45°. This will allow any mammal to escape and avoid increased stress from being trapped.*
- *A pre inspection check of all scrub habitat is recommended immediately prior to vegetation clearance works. Whilst the presence of badger within the site boundary is considered unlikely it cannot be completely ruled out. A pre inspection check of vegetation immediately prior to clearance work will check for any large mammal signs.*
- *Artificial lighting has the potential to affect a wide range of nocturnal species. All lighting must meet recommendations in the BCT Guidance Note 08/23 Bats and Artificial Lighting at Night in the UK document <https://www.bats.org.uk/news/2023/08/bats-and-artificial-lighting-at-night-ilp-guidance-note-update-released>."*

6.18 As identified within the PEA, it is acknowledged that the proposals for the development of the site will likely in the loss of short perennial vegetation, scrub habitat and semi improved grassland. No mature trees will be lost as a result of the proposed development and as such there is considered to be low potential for bat use. In line with the above recommendations of the PEA, a Reptile Survey Report has

since been undertaken which confirmed no evidence of reptile activity across the site boundary.

- 6.19 The submitted landscape plan demonstrates that new native planting within the site would provide an attractive layout with green infrastructure provisions tied in, to enhance biodiversity opportunities and to provide a well-designed scheme that provides an attractive environment for residents to live in and enjoy.
- 6.20 The design of the external lighting proposed, including street lighting and security lighting, has been formulated to minimise impacts to wildlife within the site's vicinity.
- 6.21 The mitigation and enhancement measures for biodiversity and landscape proposed have been considered in line with the measures detailed within the Environment (Wales) Act 2016 and recent revisions made to PPW (12th Edition) to secure GI and biodiversity enhancement.
- 6.22 Accordingly, it is considered that the proposed development complies with national and local planning policy on biodiversity, green infrastructure, and landscape mitigation and enhancement, including LDP Policies AW5 'New Development', AW8 'Protection and Enhancement of the Natural Environment', and AW10 'Environmental Protection and Public Health'.

Impact on Highways

- 6.23 In terms of access, the accompanying Transport Statement has been prepared by Asbri Transport which shows that access provision for vehicular movements off the Hirwaun Road is acceptable and can be delivered safely with adequate visibility splays provided both directions.
- 6.24 The parking provision is also considered to be acceptable due to it meeting CSS Wales Parking Standards, with a total of 28no. car parking spaces proposed to be delivered – inclusive of residential and visitor car parking spaces. This has been accepted in the pre-application discussions with the Highway officer.
- 6.25 The accompanying Transport Note demonstrates that:
- That the quantum of development is such that traffic flows will be below the threshold of 300 two-way movements, as set out within the Design Manual for Roads and Bridges (DMRB);
 - That appropriate access off Hirwaun Road into the site can be achieved;
 - The proposed access has been reviewed against applicable standards, within the context the local highway environment and safety record; and

- The proposed simple priority junction design is appropriate for this location and proposed development, with right-turn facility deemed as not required.

- 6.26 It is noted that the Highways officer does not support the proposed new single point of access served off the principal route A4059 noting it will increase delays on the principal route and increase hazards to the detriment of safety of all highway users. The preference for the Highways officer would be to utilise an access from Ger-y-Bont, as per the previous planning permissions (2008 & 2014), however, while the pre-application response seeks to push the application towards using an alternative access route from Ger-y-Bont, that is not possible due to a number of design constraints.
- 6.27 We have assessed the previous planning permissions and the scope to provide an access from Ger-y-Bont, however, the previous permissions were not viable given the amount of road infrastructure that would be required as well as a large retaining wall feature to access the plateau of the development which we have tried to reduce across the site. Furthermore, the current SuDS design accommodates a pond set to the west of the development off Ger Y Bont which would have to be removed to accommodate the access and constructed on the upper section of the development, in turn sterilising a portion of the upper plateau thus making the development unviable. The nature of the SuDs feature is that this has to be developed at the lowest part of the site which is the area near Ger-y-Bont. The site frontage along Hirwaun Road includes a number of below ground infrastructure including mains drainage which means that the SuDS features couldn't be designed within this area.
- 6.28 Furthermore, from a planning perspective is the close proximity that the new road would be to the rear of the plot 9 and 10 Ger-y-Bont and the obvious impact would be the large concrete retaining wall but also the noise of the vehicles and pollution in close proximity to their rear garden.
- 6.29 In conclusion, serving the access from Hirwaun road is considered to be the preferred location from an engineering, viability, placemaking and is acceptable from a highway safety perspective. The alternative arrangement would not be acceptable and it is not necessary to consider further given that the proposed access junction can be delivered successfully without any detriment to highway safety. As such, it is considered to be acceptable and in accordance with Policy AW2 in that it would not unacceptably conflict with surrounding uses, Policy AW5 and AW6 as it would provide a high-quality design and NSA 12 as it would not adversely affect the highway network and would be accessible to local services by a range of modes of transport, on foot or by cycle.

Conclusion

- 7.1 This Planning Statement has been prepared on behalf of Newydd Housing Association in relation to the proposed full planning application for the development of 17no. dwellings on land to the east of Ger-y-Bont, Penywaun.
- 7.2 The proposed development presents an opportunity for Newydd Housing Association to deliver much needed affordable housing provision in a sustainable location within a defined Small Settlement as per the settlement hierarchy set out within the Rhondda Cynon Taf Local Development Plan. The proposed development will result in the delivery of a positive mix of housing in an area where there is a significant housing need in the north of Rhondda Cynon Taf, whilst being in keeping with the surrounding residential context.
- 7.3 The site is located within the settlement boundary within the defined settlement boundary for Penywaun, as per the Rhondda Cynon Taf County Borough Council Local Development Plan 2006-2021. The development of the site would be delivered in a sympathetic manner with adequate provisions for landscaping, parking, and drainage infrastructure made, in addition to ecological and landscape mitigation and enhancement where necessary. In line with national planning policy, design measures have been formulated with placemaking principles in mind, and it is considered that the principle of development behind the scheme is sustainable.
- 7.4 In light of the above, it is considered that the proposed development is in accordance with key Local Development Plan policies including Policies CS1 'Development in the North', CS5 'Affordable Housing', AW2 'Sustainable Locations', AW5 'New Development', AW6 'Design and Placemaking', NSA10 'Housing Density', NSA11 'Affordable Housing', NSA12 'Housing Development Within and Adjacent to Settlement Boundaries'.
- 7.5 It is for the above reasons that it is respectfully requested that Rhondda Cynon Taf County Borough Council grant full planning permission for the residential development, as proposed, on land to the east of Ger-y-Bont, Penywaun, for the development of 17no. affordable dwellings.